Chapter 1

The Many Ways to Design a Web Page

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In This Chapter

- Comparing Web design options
- Understanding browser differences
- Developing a Web site
- Customizing your workspace

Web design is an art and a science. I think that's what makes it so hard. Most of us don't have the artistic talent to create great Web designs, the science and math skills to develop all the technical elements, and the understanding of interface design and usability that make a Web site easy to use and intuitive to navigate. But you need all those skills to create a great Web site. That's why most of the best Web sites were created by a team of people with many different specialties.

In the early days, Web design was relatively easy — and vanilla boring. You could combine images and text, but that was about it; no complex layouts, no fancy fonts, and certainly no multimedia or animation.

Over the years, Web design has evolved into an increasingly complex field and Dreamweaver has evolved with it, adding new features that go way beyond the basics of combining a few words and images.

When I first started learning to creating Web sites in the mid 1990s, it was easy to learn and easy to teach others how to do it. More than 10 years and a dozen books later, it's a lot more complex, and I've come to realize that one of the first things you have to understand about Web design is that there isn't just one way to create a Web site anymore.

Today, you can find out how to design simple Web sites with HTML in a matter of hours or you can spend years developing the advanced programming skills it takes to create complex Web sites like the ones you see at Amazon.com or MSNBC.

For everything in between, Dreamweaver is the clear choice among professional Web designers as well as among a growing number of people who want to build sites for their hobbies, clubs, families, and small businesses.

But before we dive into the details about how you create a Web page in Dreamweaver, I think it's helpful to start by introducing the many ways you can create a Web site. The more you understand about the various approaches to Web design, the better you can appreciate your options.

Comparing Web Designs

Throughout this book, you find chapters covering a variety of aspects of Web design, from the basics of creating a page and adding images and links to more complex concepts such as creating rollover effects and pop-up windows with Dreamweaver's behaviors, which use JavaScript to create advanced interactive features.

You also find a few chapters that explore different page layout techniques. You can create Web designs using HTML tables, frames, or Cascading Style Sheets. You can even use these different technologies in combination. The next few sections are designed to help you understand the differences in these approaches before you decide which one is best for your Web site.

Appreciating the advantages of CSS

Today, the W3C, which sets standards for the Internet, recommends CSS for nearly every aspect of Web design. That's because the best CSS designs are accessible, flexible, and adaptable. Also, the fact that they follow standards has become increasingly important over the years.

If everyone who designed Web sites and everyone who created the browsers that displayed them followed the same standards, we'd have a much better Internet today. Unfortunately, over the years Web technology has evolved but Web browsers haven't always displayed the features of Web sites in the same way. As a result, the same Web page can look quite different from one browser to another, especially in older browsers. (You find more about browser differences and testing your designs in Chapter 4.)

Today, there is a growing movement among some of the best designers in the world to get everyone to follow the same standards, create Web sites with CSS, and make sure they are accessible to everyone.

When Web designers talk about *accessibility,* they mean creating a site that can be accessed by anyone who might ever visit your pages — and that includes people with limited vision who use special browsers (often called screen readers) that *read* Web pages aloud, as well as many others who use specialized browsers for a variety of other reasons.

If you work for a university, a nonprofit, a government agency, or a similar organization, you may be required to create accessible designs. But even if you're not required to use CSS or to design for accessibility, it's still good practice. That's why Dreamweaver CS3 includes so many CSS features and a collection of predesigned CSS layouts like the one I used to create the site design shown in Figure 1-1. You find instructions for creating CSS layouts like this one in Chapter 6.

One of the big advantages of CSS is that it lets you separate content from design. For example, instead of formatting every headline in your site as 24-point Arial bold, you can create a style for the `<h1>` tag and use it to format all your headlines. Then if you decide later that you want all your headlines to use the Garamond font instead of Arial, you need to change the style for the `<h1>` tag only once in the style sheet and it automatically applies everywhere you've used that style.

Adobe Dreamweaver CS3 - [...aver\aa Total Training For DW 9\Project Files - DW CS3 After FINAL\Part 2\Lesson 03\Sea Birds\zuma.html (XHTML)]
File Edit View Insert Modify Text Commands Site Window Help
Insert Common Layout Forms Data Spry Text Favorites
zuma.html
Code Split Design Title: Zuma Beach Check Page
ZUMA BEACH
MALIBU, CALIFORNIA
Saunderlings Play on the Shore
These small Sandpipers dodge the waves at Zuma Beach in Malibu, California.
Saunderlings feed on the beach in flocks spread out in lines along the water's edge, usually arranged in groups of three or four.
They make a sharp, high kit sound and scurry very fast.
<body> <div#container2> <div#header>
Properties
Format None Style None CSS Link
Font Verdana, Arial Size 100 % #000000 Target

Figure 1-1: This site was designed using one of Dreamweaver's CSS layouts.

Separating content from design also enables you to create different style sheets for different audiences and devices. In the future this is likely to become even more important as a growing number of people view Web pages on everything from giant flat-screen monitors to tiny cell phone screens like the one shown in Figure 1-2. One of the coolest additions to Dreamweaver CS3 is Device Central, where you can preview your page designs in a variety of handheld devices and cell phones to see just how different they can look when displayed on these small screens.

As you get more advanced with CSS, you can create multiple style sheets for the same Web page. For example, you can create one that's ideally suited to a small screen like the one shown in Figure 1-2, another that works best when the page is printed, and yet another designed with a larger font size for anyone who may have a trouble reading the small print that is so common on Web pages.

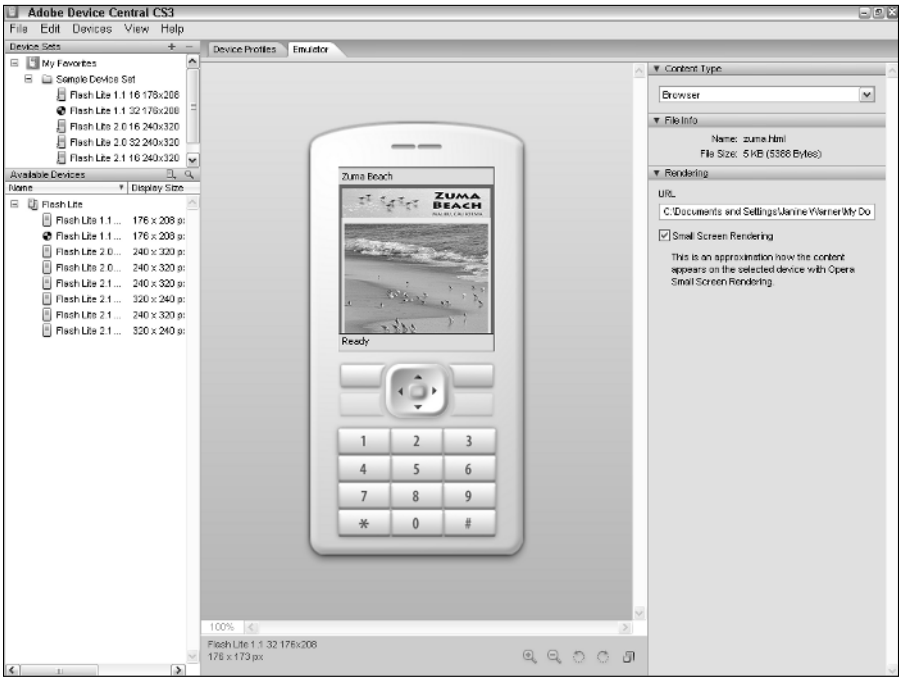

Figure 1-2: Designing Web pages with CSS can help you create designs that display better on large and small screens.

Reviewing old-school designs

Although CSS is by far the best option for creating Web designs today, many sites on the Web were created using tables to control the layout, like the one shown in Figure 1-3. Old-school sites like this one were created using the HTML table tag. To help you appreciate how this page was created, I altered the original design to display the table borders, although most designers turn off table borders when using them to create layouts like this.

Because you can merge and split table cells, you can control the layout of a page, positioning text and images more or less where you want them. And if you set the table border to 0 (instead of 10 as I did here to show you the borders), you can hide the table so that it doesn't interfere with the design.

In Chapter 7, you find an introduction to Dreamweaver's Table features and tips for creating accessible table designs by including the table header tag in all your tables. You can even combine CSS with tables to create more streamlined designs.

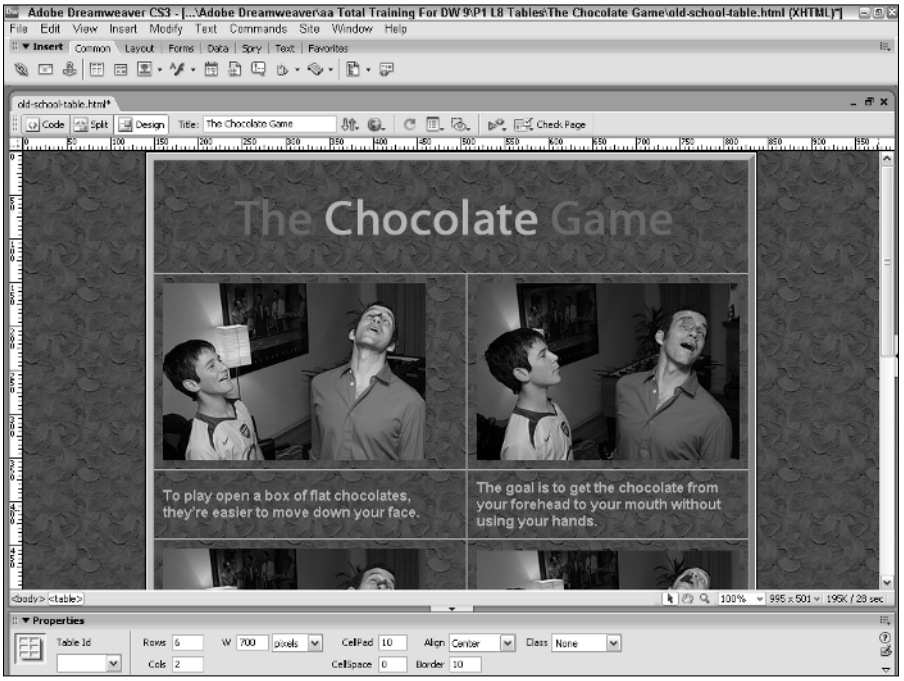
Adobe Dreamweaver CS3 - [...\Adobe Dreamweaver\aa Total Training For DW 9\P1 L8 Tables\The Chocolate Game\old-school-table.html (XHTML)*]
File Edit View Insert Modify Text Commands Site Window Help
old-school-table.html*
Code Split Design Title: The Chocolate Game
The Chocolate Game
To play open a box of flat chocolates, they're easier to move down your face.
The goal is to get the chocolate from your forehead to your mouth without using your hands.
Properties

Figure 1-3: In the old days, the only way you could create a complex Web page design was by using a HTML table like the one shown here to control the placement of text and images.

Although I recommend that you redesign sites like the one shown in Figure 1-3 with CSS and `<div>` tags, as you'll find out how to do in Chapter 6, I do understand that many designers still find it easier to create layouts with tables, and not everyone has time to redesign their Web sites right away. I have to admit, I've been guilty of leaving sites online designed with tables long after I learned better myself. So in the chapter on tables, I show you how to use Dreamweaver's features to create a page layout like the one in Figure 1-3, as well as how best to create tables for displaying tabular data like the content you'd find in a spreadsheet.

Although tables are no longer recommended for page layouts, they are still considered the best way to format data like the order page from the artist site shown in Figure 1-4.

Considering frame options

In Chapter 8 you find instructions for creating Web sites that use frames, like the family site shown in Figure 1-5. Many designers make a face much like the one my niece is displaying in the photo in Figure 1-5 because they think Frames are a terrible way to design Web sites.

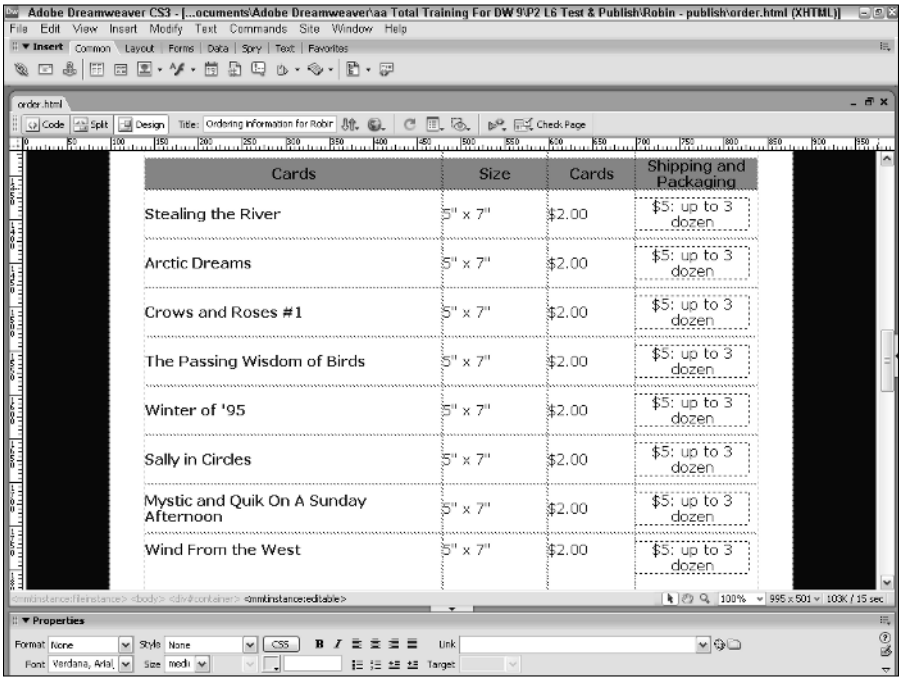
Adobe Dreamweaver CS3 - [...ocuments\Adobe Dreamweaver\aa Total Training For DW 9\P2 L6 Test & Publish\Robin - publish\order.html (XHTML)]
File Edit View Insert Modify Text Commands Site Window Help
order.html
Code Split Design Title: Ordering information for Robir Check Page
Cards | Size | Cards | Shipping and Packaging
Stealing the River | 5" x 7" | $2.00 | $5: up to 3 dozen
Arctic Dreams | 5" x 7" | $2.00 | $5: up to 3 dozen
Crows and Roses #1 | 5" x 7" | $2.00 | $5: up to 3 dozen
The Passing Wisdom of Birds | 5" x 7" | $2.00 | $5: up to 3 dozen
Winter of '95 | 5" x 7" | $2.00 | $5: up to 3 dozen
Sally in Circles | 5" x 7" | $2.00 | $5: up to 3 dozen
Mystic and Quik On A Sunday Afternoon | 5" x 7" | $2.00 | $5: up to 3 dozen
Wind From the West | 5" x 7" | $2.00 | $5: up to 3 dozen
Properties

Figure 1-4: Tables are still considered the best way to display tabular data like the information on this order page.

Figure 1-5: Frames enable you to display multiple Web pages in one browser window.

Frames have a bad rep, and there are some compelling reasons why they're not used much anymore. But frames still have their place on the Web, so I've included a chapter on the basics of using Dreamweaver's frame features to create pages like the one in Figure 1-5 that display multiple Web pages in one browser window.

Creating dynamic Web sites

When you use Dreamweaver's most advanced features, you can create Web sites (like the one shown in Figures 1-6 and 1-7) which connect to a database and display content dynamically on a Web page.

What's happening behind the scenes of a site like the one at `www.PowerYoga.com` gets complicated fast, but one of the advantages of using this kind of technology is that you can create a Web page like the one in Figure 1-7 and make it easy for anyone to enter data, like the details for a new event, even if they don't know how to use Dreamweaver. If you've used Dreamweaver's programming features, such as PHP or ASP, to set up a system that saves that data into a database automatically, you can then serve the contents of the form back to the live site on a page like the one shown in Figure 1-6, which includes a long list of events and retreats.

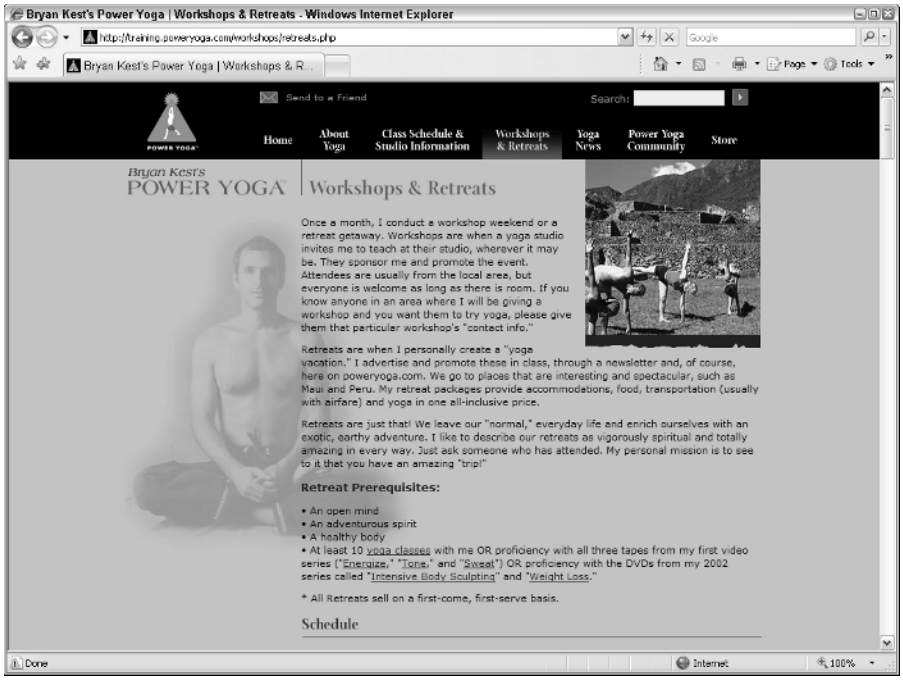
Bryan Kest's Power Yoga | Workshops & Retreats - Windows Internet Explorer
http://training.poweryoga.com/workshops/retreats.php
Bryan Kest's Power Yoga | Workshops & R...
Send to a Friend
Search:
Home
About Yoga
Class Schedule & Studio Information
Workshops & Retreats
Yoga News
Power Yoga Community
Store
Bryan Kest's POWER YOGA
Workshops & Retreats
Once a month, I conduct a workshop weekend or a retreat getaway. Workshops are when a yoga studio invites me to teach at their studio, wherever it may be. They sponsor me and promote the event. Attendees are usually from the local area, but everyone is welcome as long as there is room. If you know anyone in an area where I will be giving a workshop and you want them to try yoga, please give them that particular workshop's "contact info."
Retreats are when I personally create a "yoga vacation." I advertise and promote these in class, through a newsletter and, of course, here on poweryoga.com. We go to places that are interesting and spectacular, such as Maui and Peru. My retreat packages provide accommodations, food, transportation (usually with airfare) and yoga in one all-inclusive price.
Retreats are just that! We leave our "normal," everyday life and enrich ourselves with an exotic, earthy adventure. I like to describe our retreats as vigorously spiritual and totally amazing in every way. Just ask someone who has attended. My personal mission is to see to it that you have an amazing "trip!"
Retreat Prerequisites:
• An open mind
• An adventurous spirit
• A healthy body
• At least 10 yoga classes with me OR proficiency with all three tapes from my first video series ("Energize," "Tone," and "Sweat") OR proficiency with the DVDs from my 2002 series called "Intensive Body Sculpting" and "Weight Loss."
* All Retreats sell on a first-come, first-serve basis.
Schedule
Done
Internet
100%

Figure 1-6: PowerYoga.com is a dynamic Web site that displays content from a database using PHP.

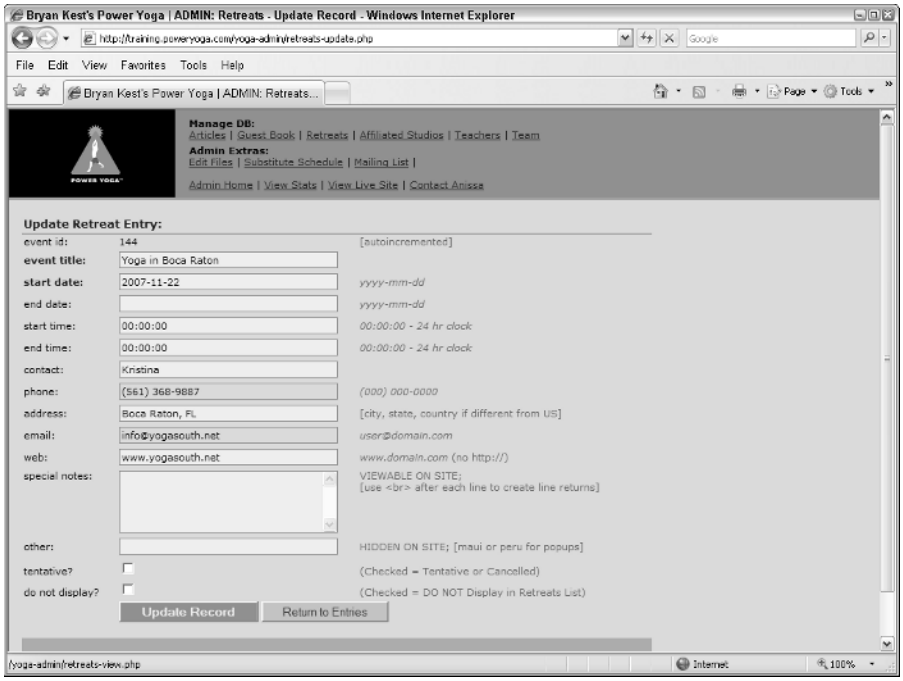
Bryan Kest's Power Yoga | ADMIN: Retreats - Update Record - Windows Internet Explorer
http://training.poweryoga.com/yoga-admin/retreats-update.php
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Bryan Kest's Power Yoga | ADMIN: Retreats...
Manage DB:
Articles | Guest Book | Retreats | Affiliated Studios | Teachers | Team
Admin Extras:
Edit Files | Substitute Schedule | Mailing List |
Admin Home | View Stats | View Live Site | Contact Anissa
Update Retreat Entry:
event id: 144 [autoincremented]
event title: Yoga in Boca Raton
start date: 2007-11-22 yyyy-mm-dd
end date: yyyy-mm-dd
start time: 00:00:00 00:00:00 - 24 hr clock
end time: 00:00:00 00:00:00 - 24 hr clock
contact: Kristina
phone: (561) 368-9887 (000) 000-0000
address: Boca Raton, FL [city, state, country if different from US]
email: info@yogasouth.net user@domain.com
web: www.yogasouth.net www.domain.com (no http://)
special notes: VIEWABLE ON SITE; [use <br> after each line to create line returns]
other: HIDDEN ON SITE; [maui or peru for popups]
tentative? (Checked = Tentative or Cancelled)
do not display? (Checked = DO NOT Display in Retreats List)
Update Record
Return to Entries
/yoga-admin/retreats-view.php
Internet
100%

Figure 1-7: Use Dreamweaver's dynamic site development features to create interactive pages like this administrative tool for adding events to the event page shown in Figure 1-6.

In Figure 1-7, you see an administrative tool that was designed to make it easy for someone who works at Power Yoga to update this section of the site without having to know HTML or even Dreamweaver, but you could also use this technology to create an online discussion board or any other system that collects data in one page and then uses that data to determine what is displayed on another page.

That's how the most advanced sites on the Web do things like remind you of the last book you searched for or keep track of your order as you select products in an online shopping cart. Although I can't cover all these advanced features in this book, you find an introduction to creating database-driven Web sites in Chapters 13, 14, and 15.

One other thing I feel compelled to mention at this point is that most of the big, complicated Web sites in the world were created by a team of developers, not just one person. In the case of the Power Yoga site, the design was created by Kathy McCarthy and the programming that makes all the dynamic features work was created by my friend Anissa Thompson. And that's part of why Christine Fang, the Managing Director who runs Power Yoga, is able to update the training section by herself using a Web browser, even though she knows only a little HTML.

Understanding Browser Differences

Another thing that's important to understand before you start creating Web pages is that no matter how carefully you create your designs, your pages will never look exactly the same to every possible visitor to your site. That's because one of the greatest advantages of the Web is also one of the biggest challenges. HTML was created to share information in a way that could be displayed on every computer on the planet. Unfortunately, not all those computers use the same browsers, or the same fonts, or the same-sized monitors. On top of that, a lot of older Web browsers are out there, and they can't display the latest Web features. And even the newer browsers don't all display the same features the same way.

As a result, although you have more design control today than ever before, and the capability to create more interesting Web sites, you also have more challenges if you want your pages to look good to everyone who might visit your site. My best advice is to test, test, test, and then ask your friends to test your pages some more. If you want to play it safe, the simpler your page design, the more likely it will look the same, or at least similar, to all your visitors.

If you want to create more interesting designs, and you want to reach the broadest possible audience, pay special attention to Dreamweaver's browser preview and compatibility features and be prepared to look for more advanced

books and training programs when you finish with this one. Entire books and Web sites are dedicated to creating layouts that work on a variety of computers and browsers.

Because you're reading this book, I assume you are relatively new to Web design or looking for a refresher course and a chance to update your skills with CSS and the new features in Dreamweaver CS3, so I begin with the basics. In the next sections of this chapter, you find a few tips and suggestions for planning a Web site. At the end of this chapter, you find an introduction to Dreamweaver's interface.

Over the course of the nearly 400 pages that follow, you find a variety of approaches to Web design, from old-school techniques like tables and frames to the newest and most advanced features like CSS and multimedia.

Developing a New Site

In a nutshell, building a Web site involves creating individual pages and linking them to other pages. You need to have a home page (the first page visitors will see when they arrive at your URL) and that page needs to bring them into the rest of the pages of the site, usually with links to each of the main sections of the site. Those pages, in turn, link to subsections that can then lead to deeper subsections.

A big part of planning a Web site is determining how to divide the pages of your site into sections and how those sections should link to one another. Dreamweaver makes creating pages and setting links easy, but how you organize the pages is up to you.

If you're new to this, you may think you don't need to worry much about how your Web site will grow and develop. Think again. All good Web sites grow, and the bigger they get, the harder they are to manage. Planning the path of growth for your Web site before you begin can make a tremendous difference later. Neglecting to think about growth is probably one of the most common mistakes among new designers. This becomes even more serious when more than one person is working on the same site. Without a clearly established site organization and some common conventions for tasks such as naming files, confusion reigns.

Managing your site's structure

Managing the structure of a Web site has two sides: the side that users see, which depends on how you set up links, and the behind-the-scenes side, which depends on how you organize files and folders.

What the user sees

The side that the user sees is all about navigation. When users arrive at your home page, where do you direct them? How do they move from one page to another in your site? A good Web site is designed so that users navigate easily and intuitively and can make a beeline to the information most relevant to them. As you plan, make sure that users can

- Access key information easily from more than one place in the site
- Move back and forth easily between pages and sections
- Return to main pages and subsections in one step

Setting links is easy in Dreamweaver; the challenge is to make sure that those links are easy for visitors to follow.

What's behind the scenes

The second side to managing your Web site structure happens behind the scenes (where your users can't see the information, but you want some kind of organizational system to remember what's what). Before you get too far into building your site with Dreamweaver, spend some time thinking about the management issues involved in keeping track of all the files you create for your site. *Files* are all the images, HTML pages, animations, sound files, and anything else you put in your Web site.

Once your Web site grows past a handful of pages, organizing them in separate folders or directories can help you keep track. Fortunately, Dreamweaver makes this easy by providing a Files panel, shown in Figure 1-8, where you can see all the files of your site and even move and rename files and folders. (You find detailed instructions for organizing the files and folders in a Web site in Chapters 2 and 4.)

Under construction? No hard hats here!

All good Web sites are under construction — always. It's the nature of the Web. But build your site in such a way that you can add pages when they're ready instead of putting up placeholders. Don't greet your viewers with a guy in a yellow hat who seems to say, "You clicked this link for no good reason. Come back another day, and maybe we'll have something for you to see." Instead of creating "Under Construction" placeholders, create directory structures that make adding new pages later easy. You can let readers know that new things are coming by putting notices on pages that already have content — a message like "Come here next Thursday for a link to something even cooler" is a great idea. But never make users click a link and wait for a page to load, only to find that nothing but a guy with a hard hat is waiting for them.

Preparing and planning a Web site

One of the most common mistakes new Web designers make is plunging into developing a site without thinking through all their goals, priorities, budget, and design options. The instinct is to simply start creating pages, throw them all into one big directory, and then string stuff together with links. Then, when designers finally test the site out on an audience, they're often surprised when users say the site is hard to navigate and they can't find what they want.

Save yourself some grief by planning ahead, and you stand a much better chance of creating an attractive Web site that's easy to maintain and update.

Visualizing your site

Before you get too far into building Web pages, take some time to plan your site and think about its structure and organization. A good place to begin is by answering the following questions:

- What do you want to accomplish with your Web site? (What are your goals and objectives?)
- Who is your target audience?
- Who will be working on your site? How many developers do you have to manage?
- How will you create or collect the text and images you need for your site?
- How will you organize the files in your site?
- Will you include multimedia files such as Flash, audio, or video?
- Will you want interactive features such as a feedback form or chat room?
- What kind of navigation system will you have for your site (that is, how can you make it easy for visitors to move from one page or section to another in your site)?
- How will you accommodate growth and further development of the site? (Good Web sites always grow over time.)

Taking the time to get clear on your goals and objectives is time well spent. It can help you set the tone for a successful Web project from the beginning and ensure you spend your precious time, money, and energy on the elements and features that matter most.

Preparing for development

One of the first things many professional Web designers do when they're working on a new site with a group or a company is hold a brainstorming session with a few key people who understand the mission for the Web site. The purpose of this session is to come up with proposed sections and features for the

site, what should be included, and how the site should be organized. A good brainstorming session is a nonjudgmental free-for-all — a chance for everyone involved to share all the ideas they can think of, whether realistic or not.

Not discrediting ideas at the brainstorming stage is important. Often an unrealistic idea leads to an innovation that no one may have thought of otherwise, especially when you're working on the Internet, where the best ideas are almost always new ones.

After a brainstorming session like this, you'll probably have a long list of possible features to develop into your site. Your next challenge is to edit that list to the most important ones and then plan your course of development to ensure that everything will work well together when you're finished.

Customizing the Workspace in Dreamweaver CS3

Dreamweaver can seem a bit overwhelming at first. It has so many features, and they are spread out in so many panels, toolbars, and dialog boxes that you can easily get lost. If you prefer to understand by poking around, have at it (and feel free to skip ahead to the next chapter, where you start building your first Web page right away). If you want a tour before you get started, the last few sections of this chapter introduce you to the interface and are designed to give you a quick overview of the features in this powerful program.

When you launch Dreamweaver, the Start screen appears in the main area of the program (and reappears anytime you don't have a file open unless you close it permanently by selecting the Don't Show Again option). From the Start screen, you can choose to create a new page from one of the many Dreamweaver predesigned sample files, or you can create a new blank page by selecting HTML from the Create New options in the middle column. When you select HTML, Dreamweaver creates a new blank HTML page in the main *workspace,* as shown in Figure 1-8.

You build HTML pages, templates, style sheets, and other files in the workspace, which consists of a main window that shows the page you're working on surrounded by a number of panels and menus that provide tools you can use to design and develop your pages. The Dreamweaver workspace consists of the following basic components: the menu bar (at the very top), the Insert bar (just below it), the Document window (the main area of the screen, just below the Insert bar), the Property inspector (at the bottom of the screen), and the vertical docking panels (to the right of the Document window) that expand and collapse as needed. More detailed descriptions of each of these follows.

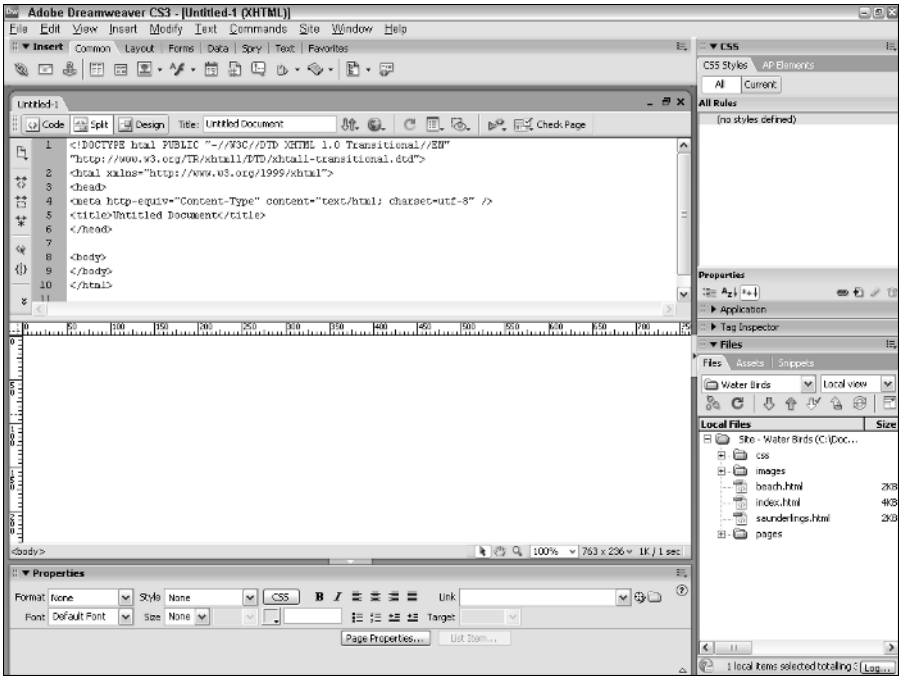

Figure 1-8: When you use split view, you can select text in design view, and Dreamweaver automatically highlights the corresponding code in code view.

Dreamweaver has two main program layout settings: the designer layout, shown in Figure 1-8, and the coder layout, which places the panels on the left side of the screen instead of the right side. You can change layouts by choosing Window➪Workspace Layout and then choosing Coder or Designer.

The Document window

The big, open section in the main area of the workspace is the Document window, which is where you work on new and existing pages. If you use the Designer interface in design view, you see your page as it would appear in a Web browser. If you want to see the HTML code behind your page, click the Code button at the top of the work area. Choose the Split button to see the HTML code and design view simultaneously (which you can see in Figure 1-8).

Customizing the interface

The docking panels, palettes, and bars in Dreamweaver provide easy access to most of the program's features, and you can drag these elements around the screen. You can also close any panels on the right by clicking the tiny Options icon in the top right of each panel and choosing Close Panel from the drop-down list. (The Options icon looks like three bullet points with lines next to them and a little arrow underneath, and it's really, really small.) You can also close all the panels at once by choosing Window➪Hide Panels (or by clicking the arrow in the middle of the row of panels). If you want to open a panel, select it from the Window menu. For example, to open the CSS Styles panel, choose Window➪CSS Styles.

The Insert bar

The Insert bar, located at the top of the screen, includes seven *subcategories,* each with a different set of icons representing common features. Click the small arrow to the right of the name to access the drop-down list and switch from the buttons of one subcategory to the buttons for another. The options are

- **Common bar:** Displays icons for many of the most common features, including links, tables, and images.
- **Layout bar:** Displays div, table, and frame options essential for creating page layouts.
- **Forms bar:** Features the most common form elements, such as radio buttons and boxes.
- **Data bar:** Displays options for building dynamic Web pages powered by database material.
- **Spry bar:** Features a collection of widgets that combines HTML, CSS, and JavaScript to create interactive page elements.
- **Text bar:** Displays common text-formatting features, including paragraphs, breaks, and lists.
- **Favorites bar:** Enables you to right-click (Windows) or Control+click (Mac) to add any of the icons from any of the other Insert bar options to create your own collection of favorite features.

At the end of the drop-down list is Show as Tabs option, which enables you to display the names of the Insert bars as tabs across the top of the screen, as shown in Figure 1-9.

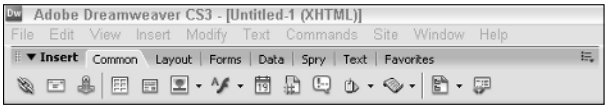
Adobe Dreamweaver CS3 - [Untitled-1 (XHTML)]
File Edit View Insert Modify Text Commands Site Window Help
Insert Common Layout Forms Data Spry Text Favorites

Figure 1-9: The Common Insert bar provides access for forms, tables, images, and more.

The Property inspector

The Property inspector is docked at the bottom of the workspace in Dreamweaver. If you prefer it at the top of the screen, you can drag it to the top and it will lock into place; but I rather like that it's handy, yet out of the way, at the bottom of the screen.

The Property inspector displays the *properties,* or options, for any selected element on a page, and it changes based on what's selected. For example, if you click an image, the Property inspector displays image properties. If you click a Flash file, it displays Flash properties. Figure 1-10 shows the image options displayed in the Property inspector, including height and width, alignment, and link settings.

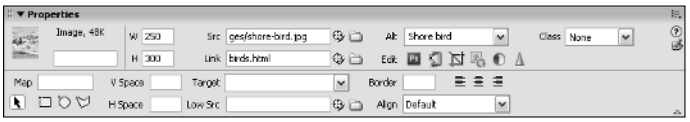

Figure 1-10: The Property inspector displays the attributes of any selected element, such as an image shown here.

At the bottom-right corner of the Property inspector, you see a small arrow. Click this arrow (or double-click in any open inspector space) to reveal additional attributes that let you control more advanced features, such as the image map options when a graphic is selected.

The docking panels

The docking panels are located to the right of the work area when you choose designer layout, as shown in Figure 1-11, or on the left if you choose coder layout. You can move the panels anywhere on the screen by clicking and dragging them.

The docking panels display a variety of important features in Dreamweaver, including all the files and folders in a site in the Files panel and Cascading Style Sheets in the CSS panel. You can open and close panels by clicking the small arrow to the left of each panel's name. To display more panels, select the panel name from the Window menu. To hide all the visible panels at once, click the tab with the small arrow in the middle of the row of panels.

Figure 1-11: Panels provide easy access to all the files, styles, and many other assets in a Web site.

The menu bar

Like most programs you've used, the menu at the top of the screen provides easy access to most program features, including the options you find in the Insert bar, Property inspector, and panels, as well as a few others that are available only from the menu.

The status bar

The status bar, at the bottom of the Document window, includes a number of useful details about the page that's open in the program, as well as access to a number of useful features. On the right side of the status bar are tool icons that control the on-screen display of your document. On the left end, you find the Tag selector, which features a collection of HTML tags that change depending on your cursor's location on the page. The tags indicate how elements on your page are formatted. If you click a tag in the Tag selector, you can select the tag and everything it contains in the main Document window, a handy feature for making precise selections in Dreamweaver.

The more you use Dreamweaver, the more you are likely to appreciate the capability to customize its features. Remember that you can always change the workspace to better suit the way you like to work, and you can easily alter Dreamweaver's preference settings using the Preferences dialog box shown in Figure 1-12 by choosing Edit➪Preferences on a Windows computer, or Dreamweaver➪Preferences if you're using a Mac.

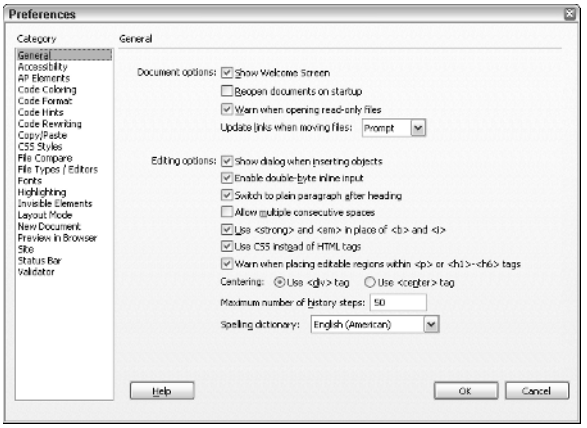

Figure 1-12: You can change how Dreamweaver creates code, displays elements, and manages accessibility options.